

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 2, 2004. Claims 1, 3 to 8, 10 to 15 and 21 to 23 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 8 and 15 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

All pending claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent 6,137,905 (Takaoka) in view of U.S. Patent 6,754,369 (Sazawa). In this regard, although the rejection in the Office Action actually refers to "102(e)", in a telephone conversation with the Examiner, she confirmed that this was a typographical error for which "§ 103(a)" was intended. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The invention concerns recognition-processing of at least one object in a digitized representation of an image. A reduced-resolution version of the image is created, and a confidence level is identified for first character recognition-processing of the reduced version of the image by using each of plural sets of initial conditions. An initial condition is selected based on each of the identified confidence levels, and a second character recognition-processing is performed on the original digitized representation of the image, based on the selected set of initial conditions.

It is thus one feature of the invention that second character recognition-processing is performed on the basis of a set of initial conditions, and the set of initial conditions is selected on the basis of confidence levels obtained from first character

recognition-processing on a reduced-resolution version of the original image using plural sets of initial conditions.

Takaoka discloses recognition units 102, 103 and 106 to perform recognition processing respectively, a decision unit 104 to compare the degree of recognition confidence of the recognition units, and a selector 105 to select any of the results of the recognition units based on the comparison result. In other words, Takaoka selects one of plural recognition results based on confidence level. This is unlike the invention, which selects a set of initial conditions for recognition-processing. Takaoka contains no such disclosure, and to emphasize the nature of the claimed "set of initial conditions" the claims have been amended so as to specify that each of the sets of initial conditions includes a threshold value to binarize an image.

Sazawa discloses recognition of a license plate at a lower resolution (Figure 3, step S5), and character-recognition processing on a candidate character area at a higher-resolution when such a candidate character area is recognized. Like Takaoka, however, Sazawa is completely silent concerning selection of a set of initial conditions for second character recognition-processing.

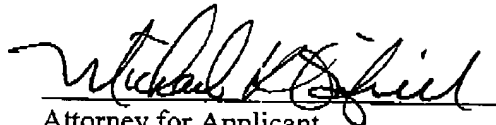
Since both Takaoka and Sazawa are silent concerning the selection of a set of initial conditions, no combination of them could have made the present invention obvious. In particular, since neither discusses selection of a set of initial conditions, no combination of them could possibly disclose or suggest selection of a set of initial conditions from plural sets of initial conditions based on first recognition-processing of a reduced-resolution of an original image, selection of the set of initial conditions based

on confidence levels obtained from each of such first character-recognition processings, and second character recognition-processing of the original image based on the selected set of initial conditions, wherein each of the plural sets of initial conditions include a threshold value to binarize an image.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims herein define subject matter that would not have been obvious from any permissible combination of Takaoka and Sazawa, and allowance of the claims herein is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant  
Michael K. O'Neill  
Registration No. 32,622

FITZPATRICK, CELIA, HARPER & SCINTO  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10112-2200  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

CA\_MAIN 91589v1